

REMARKS

Claims 15-51 were pending in this application when the present Office Action was mailed (November 4, 2004), with claims 33-36 withdrawn by the Examiner. Claims 33-36 have been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 15-32 and 37-51 are currently pending.

In the November 4, 2004 Office Action, affirmation of an election to claims 15-32 and 37-51 was requested, and the pending claims were rejected. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Affirmation of a provisional election to Group I, claims 15-32 and 37-51 was requested; and

(B) Claims 15-32 and 37-51 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-double patenting over claims 1-30 of U.S. Patent No. 6,604,708.

A. Response to the Request for Affirmation

Applicant affirms election of Invention I (claims 15-32 and 37-51) and accordingly has cancelled claims directed to Invention II (claims 33-36), without prejudice to pursuing these claims in a divisional, continuation, reissue or other application.

B. Response to the Double Patenting Rejection

Without commenting on or conceding the merits of the double patenting rejection, and in an effort to expedite issuance of the present application, applicants submit herewith a terminal disclaimer. Accordingly, the double patenting rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, the applicant requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call John M. Wechkin at (206) 359-3257.

Respectfully submitted,

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